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REVIEWS

ANSELM'S THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT: THE BOHLEN LECTURES, 1908.

By George Cadwalader Foley, D.D., Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Care in the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Longmans. 1909.

This book is not and does not purport to be a constructive treatise on the doctrine of the Atonement, but rather the examination of a particular theory of the Atonement. Yet even so we cannot but feel that its author would probably have produced a work of more permanent and definitive value had he at the outset devoted a considerable measure of attention to the Scriptural testimony bearing upon the great subject of the Atonement; in other words, if Dr. Foley had proceeded to review the theory of the *Cur Deus Homo* from the Scriptural standpoint primarily rather than from the standpoint of contemporary theological literature or even from that of the Patristic writings. The book before us is the work of a wide and appreciative reader of theological literature, rather than of a "systematic" theologian.

By his selection of such a subject as St. Anselm's conception of the Atonement, Dr. Foley pays tribute to the elements of enduring value which the author of the *Cur Deus Homo* has bequeathed to the religious thought of the world. "It is certainly remarkable, that a theory which so entirely lacked the power to commend itself to general acceptance should have contained so many ideas whose influence has persisted for eight centuries" (p 253). After making certain strictures upon the Anselmic theory of the Atonement, Dr. Foley says (p 257)—"But it must be fairly acknowledged that we are indebted to Anselm for two great services in connection with this doctrine. The first has already been sufficiently treated; by overthrowing the theory of Origen he brought our thought back to God from the devil, whose power and rights had been unduly exalted. The second is his indirect and entirely unintentional contribution to the modern reality of personal religion. His theory is justly criticised as a speculation; but, in tracing the sources of certain

spiritual impulses in and after the Reformation, we find them latent in him."

We think that Dr. Foley hardly does justice to the theology of sin and salvation as this was developed in the West; and that in his predilection for the theology of the Greek Fathers he rather exaggerates their points of difference from the Latins. For example, he seems to assume (pp. 187-8, cp. pp. 255-6) that the Greek theology of the Incarnation and of Redemption necessarily implies that our Lord would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned. But this speculation did not arise, as a matter of fact, until after Anselm's day; as is well known, Duns Scotus is its sponsor. The testimony of the greatest of the Greek Fathers, St. Athanasius is rather against it, as the quotation given by Dr. Foley (p. 50) shows, and as might be further illustrated by other passages in Athanasius' writings (Compare, for example, *On the Incarnation*, Chapters X and XX). The charge of Nestorianism brought against St. Anselm (pp. 179-181) is, we venture to think, somewhat captious. Dr. Foley condemns "quantitative comparisons between guilt and satisfaction;" he rejects the idea of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to us as being unscriptural; though dealing with the Scriptural evidence for the latter doctrine in a footnote of but five lines, and there omitting the crucial passage (Romans v:19) . . . "through the obedience of the One the many shall be made (constituted) righteous." On page 234 the author says, "Moral obligations may not even figuratively be compared to debts." But are we not taught in the Lord's Prayer to say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors?" And does not our Lord expressly compare our sins to debts in the familiar parable which He uttered in reply to St. Peter's question about forgiveness? (St. Matthew xviii, verse 25).

On the whole, the impression left upon the mind by the negations and strictures in which the book abounds, is that the positive exposition of the meaning and value of our Lord's divinely-human work of Atonement is in comparison rather vague and indistinct. We should be inclined to fear that what the average layman would carry away from hearing these lectures

would be a clearer impression of what our Lord's atoning work is *not* than of what it *is*. At the same time, there is much in the book that is excellent and helpful. The author has the gift of clear and vigorous expression; his material is compact and well arranged; his method is scholarly. Throughout the work there breathes a high ethical and spiritual conception of the Divine nature and character; and as a contribution to American theological literature the treatise has real value. W. S. B.

THE LIBERAL AND MYSTICAL WRITINGS OF WILLIAM LAW; with an Introduction by William Scott Palmer, and a Preface by W. P. DuBose, M.A., S.T.D. Longmans.

William Law, the devout seer of the eighteenth century, is receiving a well-merited revival in several quarters. Both his "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life" and his "Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection" have been brought before the public afresh, readings from the former treatise having recently been re-edited with an introduction by the Bishop of London. The volume before us presents "The Spirit of Prayer," and "The Spirit of Love," several of Law's letters upon religious subjects, "An Address to the Clergy," "The Way to Divine Knowledge," and certain of his shorter tractates. William Law is an interpreter and continuator of Jacob Behmen the Silesian mystic, but he is more than this. With Law the practical religious interest is paramount; to it the metaphysical or speculative element is thoroughly subordinated. In his reaction from the external and formal Christianity of the eighteenth century, Law reminds us of Swedenborg; but, unlike the latter, he does not undertake the rôle of an apocalyptic seer. Law still has a message for us to-day, in that he directs our attention to the inward, spiritual and personal aspect of religion. But like other mystics he fails to appreciate the value of the formal, legal and rational elements in religion. If these latter are entirely let go, religion must necessarily either evaporate into a vague sentiment, or harden into a mere code of moral conduct.